



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

Minutes 03/14/2006

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2006

Present: Jeff Thielman, Chair
Sue Sheffler, Vice Chair
Suzanne Owayda, Secretary
Sean Garballey
Susan Lovelace
Paul Schlichtman
Martin Thrope

Superintendent: Nate Levenson
Asst. Supt. Kevin Hutchinson
CFO: Garry Murphy
Sp. Ed. Director Barbara Cataldo
Student Rep EJ Harris

Call to order: 7:35 pm

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- .. Joseph Johnson - AHS alumni currently has 2 students in the METCO program; asked the sc for continued support of the program and to consider the importance of METCO program in Arlington Public Schools.
- .. Kathy Jackson APS alumni – disturbed to learn that there may be cuts in staff or eliminated positions; also urged continued support of the program.
- .. Coletta Mills – AHS alumni and METCO parent; upset with the potential cutbacks proposed in the school budget.
- .. Faustina Forbes- AHS METCO parent
- .. Jean Maguire – Executive Director of METCO
- .. Steve Pereira, Director of METCO, APS

Consent Agenda All items listed with an asterisk (*) are considered to be

routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

- .. 2nd reading of Policy CBI (align Supt. evaluation & goal setting with contract)
- .. 2nd reading of policy JLCA (language change)
- .. 2nd reading of policy JRD (bullet last paragraph)
- .. 2nd reading of policy KDB (added language and cross reference)
- .. Approval of warrant # 06118 in the amount of \$383,726.06
- .. Approval of the regular meeting minutes of January 10, 2006, February 6, 2006

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was:

Voted approval of the Consent Agenda

DIVERSITY RESOLUTION

Resolution on Diversity in Arlington Public Schools

In order for all our students to succeed in the 21st century, Arlington Public Schools must be committed to providing a successful attitude, which includes valuing and treating with respect and acceptance all members of its community. Consequently, we would like to see our School Committee adopt the following:

- Our faculty should reflect the demographics of our school. To this end, we would like to see a significant increase in the number of teachers and administrators of diverse ethnic/racial backgrounds. In order to attract and retain these teachers, we believe the following must be in place:

- Professional development that addresses cultural sensitivity and outreach to diverse staff as well as to students and their families
- Incorporation of a multicultural approach into all classes at all times, rather than developing a separate curriculum to address diversity issues
- Mentoring and coaching programs that provide significant support for new teachers to assist them in fitting in to our schools and succeeding
- Programs in place for students and teachers to address issues of acceptance for all members of our school community that teach that bullying, racist language, etc. will not be tolerated and correlate with clear and obvious guidelines for handling specific incidents
- The School Committee calls on members and groups in the community to assist us in implementing this initiative.

*On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was
Voted to adopt the Diversity Resolution with amendments as noted. Unanimous vote.*

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Supt. Levenson introduced Garry Murphy as the interim CFO.

Concession Stand Motion

The Superintendent explained that the sports user groups feel that the current concession stand is too small and that, the engineering study shows that expansion can be done without disturbing the remediation. The estimated cost is \$60,000; the groups will do fundraising to offset costs but inquired if the town or the industrial parties could help defray costs.

Mr. Levenson stated that the \$80,000 of remaining athletic funds can only be spent on Peirce Field improvements and are currently earmarked for, a transformer for baseball lights, emergency lighting for bleaches and contingency for bleacher installation. There is a possibility that \$20,00 - \$30,000 will be available upon completion of said items. After discussion with Town Manager Brian Sullivan, Town Counsel John Maher and Supt. Levenson, the recommendation is that any residual funds be used to offset the increased cost of the concession stand. Nate also pointed out that it is a good use of the money, it has the potential to be a revenue generator and that any excess monies must be returned. The Superintendent noted that the School Committee has the final say on the issue.

*On a motion by Ms Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was
Voted to approve the Superintendent's recommendation:*

That after all current projects associated with the Peirce Field Athletic complex improvement project are completed, including new bleachers, baseball lights and other improvements, remaining funds will be used to expand the concession stand next to the new stadium. Unanimous vote

Mr. Thrope noted the Forum on March 9th and the many other events scheduled for the same evening and suggested the creation of a master calendar.

PUBLIC HEARING ON FY 2007 PROPOSED BUDGET

Chairman Jeff Thielman reviewed the directives given to the superintendent by the School Committee in preparing the budget and explained that the specific recommendations of the Superintendent will be presented in tonight's budget.

Mr. Thielman announced that the school budget would be presented to the Finance Committee on Monday, March 20th, the School Committee will hold a budget workshop on Monday, March 27th at 7:00 pm and that the School Committee will take a final vote at the regular school committee meeting on Tuesday, March 28th members may make propose amendments at that time.

Supt. Levenson addressed the concerns heard relative to the METCO Program and explained the changes in the METCO program. Currently the academic support staff are aides and not certified content teachers; Mr. Levenson proposes to hire certified teachers for METCO support staff who will be hired and evaluated by the math, reading and English leaders. METCO counselors would also report in part to the K12 Director of Health, Wellness and Counseling. Nate explained that this would allow the METCO director position to become .5 FTE; with the resulting 100% of the savings going towards increased academic support in the form of an additional .8 FTE certified teacher.

In his presentation Mr. Levenson explained that in preparing the budget there were 2 choices; traditional which includes a school district approach (i.e. cut out athletics, or reduce programs and staff) or to examine if there is a way to provide all the things currently in place with less money.

The superintendent identified 5 areas where he did a lot of shifting of staff and programs:

1. *ELL – the addition of 3 FTE hired in January*
2. *Special Education – the addition of: 1.5 team chairs/testers; a Parent Liaison and Outreach; the expansion of the Out of District position and the expansion of the Special Education Coordinator to include in house programs and inclusion oversight.*
3. *Reading – the addition of 7 specialized reading teachers (in place of general reading aides), Shift responsibility to elementary principals, Support principals with enhanced lunch, office and summer help, Provide coaching to classroom teachers, knock down wall between regular and special education*
4. *Math and ELA support – the addition of 2.0 math remediation positions, the use of 4.7 FTEs gained from ELA staff teaching 5 periods for ELA remediation (both special education and general education)*
5. *Health, Wellness and Counseling – a leadership position at the cabinet level, a highly coordinated effort of 16 groups, 5.6 FTE additional counselors, \$20,000 for planning and education, new 11th grade PE/Health requirement, refocus of middle school FACS.*

Other efforts (cost neutral and still undecided) under investigation: middle school ACE for all students, elementary scheduling, sixth grade staff organization and special education aides vs. certified teachers.

Supt. Levenson emphasized that nothing was taken for granted when preparing the budget and a zero based budget developed:

- .. History, actual and projected spending for every line reviewed
- .. Add on programs combined into core curriculum
- .. Adjustments based on enrollment

Explained that the budget supports 4 out of the five district goals; special education and ELL, standards based education and common assessments, professional development and the budget. Nate stated that it is too early for (and he does not expect) changes in the 21st century goal this year.

Superintendent answered questions from:

Diane Mahon APS school parent and member of the Board of Selectmen, Trish Orlovsky APS parents and PAC chairperson, Cindy Freidman Community member, Cindy Starks APS parent, Pearl Morrison, member of the Superintendents Diversity Advisory Steve Pereira and Jill Carter and Charlotte Milan.

As required, Mr. Thielman questioned three times if there were any more comments on the budget hearing none the public hearing closed.

On a motion made and seconded the 11:00 rule was moved. Unanimous vote.

Due to the lateness of the hour, the Committee agreed to postpone discussion on the budget until the workshop scheduled for March 27th. At that meeting the Committee budget discussion will take place from 7:00 to 8:00; the public hearing will begin at 8:00 pm.

The FY2007 budget and back up materials will be available on the Arlington Public Schools website.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES REPORT

Mr. Thrope reviewed the following policies for a 1st reading.

- .. 1st reading of proposed amendment to policy JCA (limiting open enrollment in schools that are beyond capacity and lowering of maximum class size for open enrollment classrooms).
- .. 1st reading of proposed amendment to policy JJDA (requiring bond to the town treasurer for student activities accounts)
- .. 1st reading of proposed amendment to policy KE (chapter reference to Unit A & AAA contracts for public complaints).
- .. 1st reading of proposed amendment to policy KEC-R (adding cross reference to Materials Selection Policy)

- .. 1st reading of proposed amendment to policy BCG (changing review from three years to two years)

Mr. Schlichtman was not in favor of changing the policy stating that the policy manual needs a more thorough and deliberate approach; that the minor changes have been taking up considerable time on the agenda and sees no reason to change the policy.

Moved by Mr. Schlichtman with a second by Ms. Lovelace

Moved to postpone indefinitely any action on policy BCG. 5-2 motion fails

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Ms. Owayda reviewed correspondence noting the resignation of Ed Starr as the school committee representation on the Vision 2020 Standing Committee.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Owayda it was

Voted to publicize the opening on the Vision 2020 standing committee and to ask interested candidates to notify the school committee office on their interest; the committee will make an appoint at the April 11th school committee meeting. Unanimous vote

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Thielman updated the Committee on upcoming meetings:

- .. Monday, March 20th the school budget is presented to the Finance Committee. The meeting will be held at the Community Safety Building at 8:00 pm.
- .. March 25th is the Thompson International Festival
- .. Monday, March 27th the School Committee will have a budget workshop from 7:00 – 8:00 pm and then a public hearing on the budget at 8:00 pm
- .. Tuesday, March 28th the School Committee will vote the budget (scheduled for 8:30 pm on the agenda). Mr. Thielman requested that members have any proposed motions ready in writing.

Mr. Thrope requested that the date for the organizational meeting be scheduled on the next agenda

It was requested that the Superintendent report on the status of format for the submission of the Brackett, Bishop and Hardy schools for reimbursement.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Owayda it was

Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of negotiations with no further business to be conducted upon return to open

session except to adjourn. Roll Call: Unanimous vote

*On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Owayda it was unanimously
Voted to adjourn @ 11:20 PM*

*Submitted by
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary*